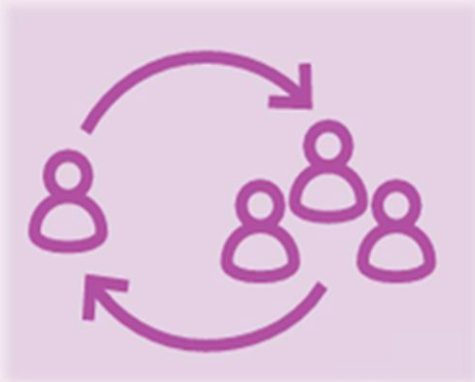




Listening and Learning on Kangaroo Island

Supporting community resilience through post-emergency engagement



Peta O'Donohue
South Australian Country Fire Service

Fiona Dunstan AFSM
Bureau of Meteorology



Listening & Learning on Kangaroo Island

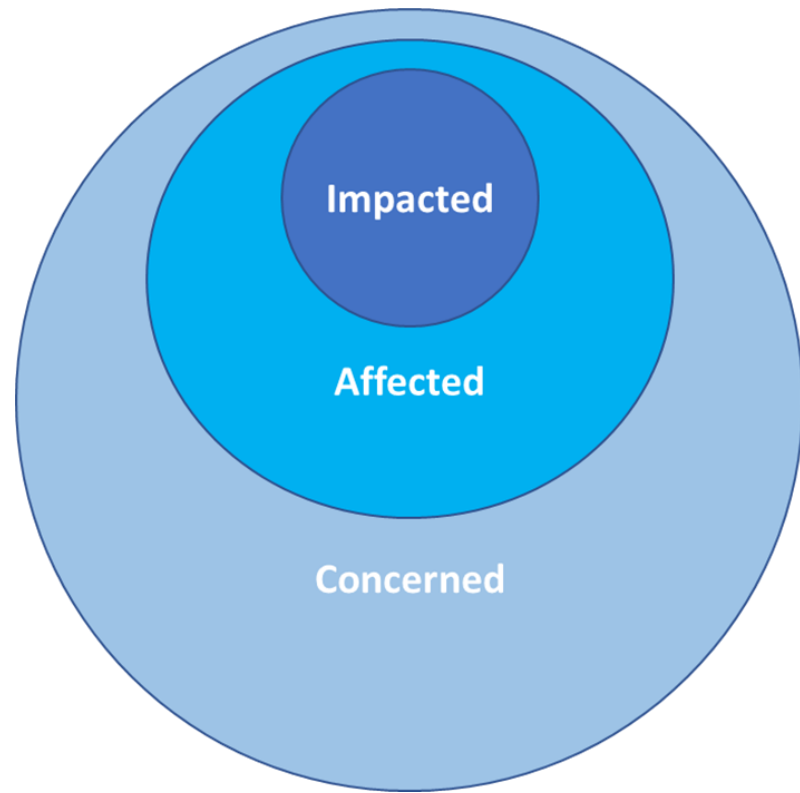


- Why we need this
- What happened
- Who was involved
- What we did
- How we listened
- What we learned

3/1/2020, Parndana, Kangaroo Island, South Australia



Engaging after an emergency

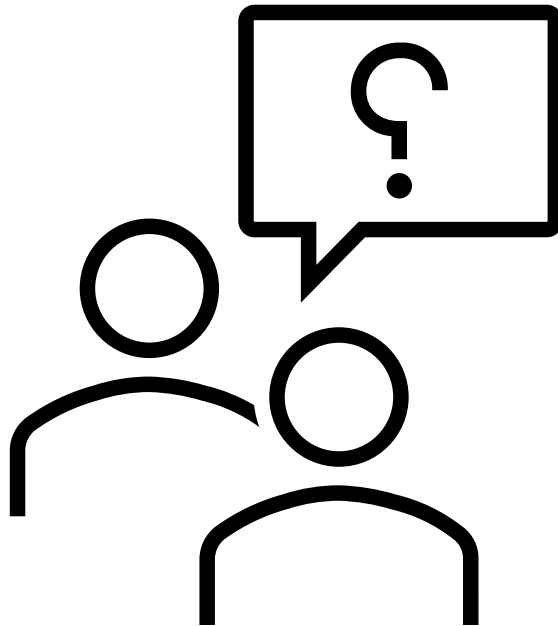


When is the right time to engage a community around emergency preparedness?

Are the community members ...?

- **Impacted** directly
- **Affected** by nearby events or near misses
- **Concerned** worried and want to get prepared

Agency capacity post-emergency



Who is ready to engage with community safely and effectively after an emergency?

Are the staff and volunteers...?

- **Impacted, affected or concerned**
- **Constrained**
- **Trained and skilled**
- **Working in partnership**



Kangaroo Island Fires 2019-2020

- 47% of Kangaroo Island burnt by complex of fires
- 211,474 ha burnt
- 2 people died, others injured
- 89 homes lost
- Businesses and infrastructure destroyed
- 98% Flinders Chase National Park & Kelly Hill Conservation Park burnt
- 59,730 animals and livestock killed
- Over 50,000 native animals killed
- Complex community and political considerations

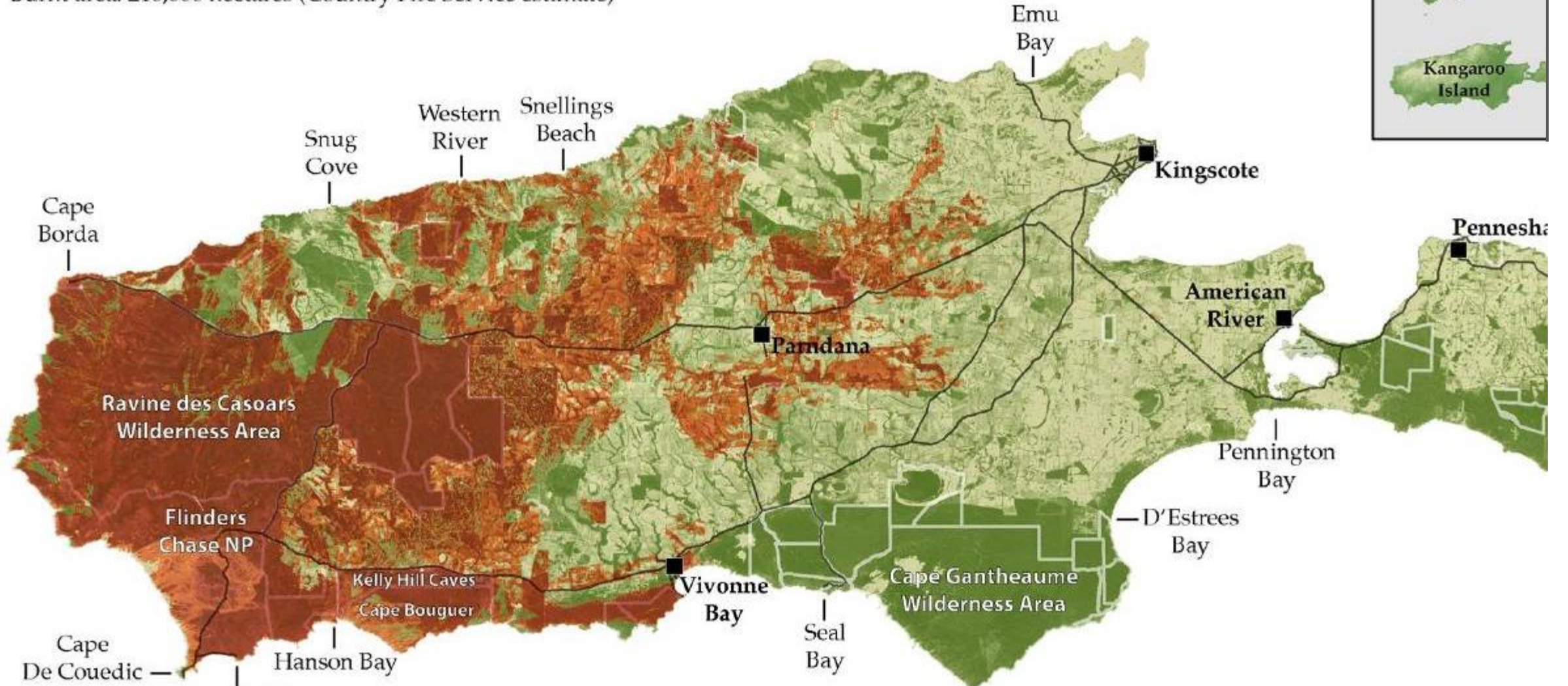


Kangaroo Island Bushfire Impacted Areas as of 30 January 2020 at 11:26AM

Sentinel-2 satellite image, processed to discriminate burnt areas.

Red areas suggest burnt vegetation. Variation in red hues due to vegetation type and soil.

Burnt area: 210,000 hectares (Country Fire Service estimate)





Context



**LESSONS FROM
THE ISLAND**
An independent review of the fires that
burnt across Kangaroo Island during
December 2019 - February 2020



**Royal Commission
into National Natural
Disaster Arrangements**



Principles for Listening and Learning

Guiding best-practice community engagement post-emergency,
and reinforcing those of Local Recovery and community

- ✓ **An immediate presence**
- ✓ **Good information**
- ✓ **Being well informed**
- ✓ **Compassion**
- ✓ **Coordinated consistent messaging**
- ✓ **Safe spaces**



Who was involved

Action Group

- South Australian Country Fire Service
- Department Environment and Water / National Parks
- Local Recovery Coordinator
- Emergency Relief
- Local Recovery Centre

Listening and Learning

- Independent facilitator
- 93 residents in person
- 22 residents online or by phone
- 25 representatives Recovery, Emergency services, National Parks, Council, and agriculture, business and mental health outreach

Kangaroo Island Fires 2019-20 Listening and Learning

SHARING COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

Approach



Planning

Action group
Community debrief & communication plan
Methodology including feedback, actions, monitoring and review



Listening to community experiences

Public meetings
Listening posts
Community survey
Industry lessons learned sessions



Themes & ideas

Data collation & theming
Categories, themes and potential actions
Q on how they wish this to be communicated and followed up



Sharing themes with community

Lessons learned
Communications & engagement activities
Feedback on potential actions



Shared actions

Action plan
Who is responsible for what by when
Implementation
Ongoing communications arrangements



Monitoring and review

Action Group
Monitoring
Review process



Sustaining action & improvement

Ongoing action group
governance
accountability
sustainability

Where we listened

Community spaces

- Western KI Caravan Park
- Raptor Domain, Seal Bay
- Parndana Sports Club
- Rock Pool Café, Stokes Bay
- Junction Community Centre
- Kingscote Business Hub
- Penneshaw CFS Station



A big thank you to the venues for hosting us and to the community members who gave up their time to share their stories

What was involved



We listened to many stories and concerns in person and through an online survey



These stories have been collated with over 100 pages describing community experiences



Themes included concerns and ideas about bushfire preparation, response and recovery



Themes in 10 key high-level categories



In total 65 themes for consideration and action

What we heard



Despite the ferocity of the fires, the Kangaroo Island community worked together to support each other, stay safe and recover.

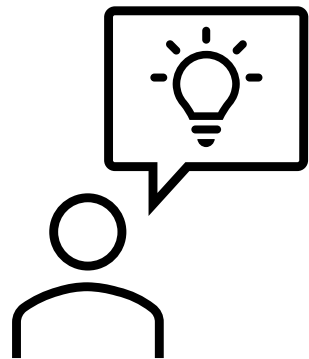
The community are proud of how they have come together to respond and recover from the fires.



Impacts

For many, the extent and ferocity of the fires was unexpected, traumatic and beyond their experience

Residents, farmers, businesses, visitors and tourists experienced the fires differently with prior experience, preparation and community networks influencing how they coped and recover.

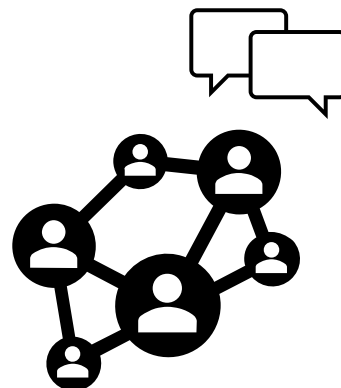


Local knowledge

Local firefighting and community relief and recovery efforts are highly valued and recognised as a community strength

Local knowledge needs to be respected and reflected in decision making.

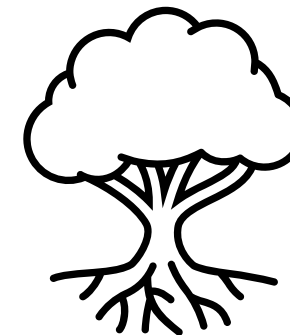
Local works need to be acknowledged and supplemented, not over-ridden.



Communications

Need clarity on rules and regulations for development and fire management on private land

Communication needs to be improved during and after a fire with information and actions communicated in a more timely, relevant and accurate manner

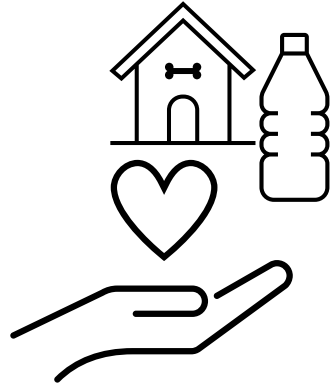


Community safety and natural values

Widespread concern about balancing community safety and the need for vegetation management and the natural values of the island.

Many requests for more burning and fuel reduction and a strategic approach to fire management

Concerns about tourist safety and visitors appreciating risk

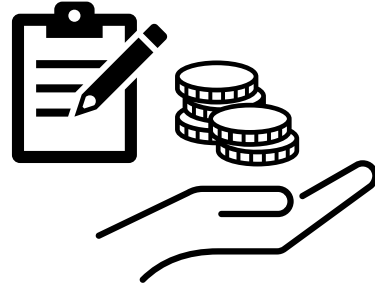


Emergency relief

Services were quickly overwhelmed and under-resourced, draining community pop-up efforts.

Community, volunteers, NGOs and local agency staff took the strain to provide food, shelter and support displaced and impacted residents and visitors.

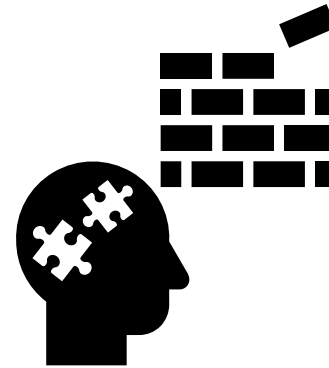
Relief needs to be better organised and resourced.



Donations and Grants

Community and global support, fundraising and donations were amazing. Not everyone is good at asking for help - it needs to be long term.

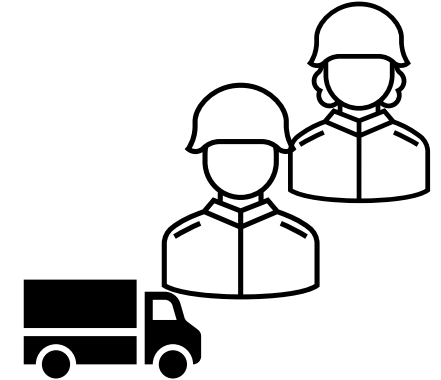
Unrequested donations caused chaos. Better structure and organisation around donations and volunteers is needed to ensure that it is a fair, equitable and effective process.



Recovery process

The recovery process since the fires has been lengthy, overwhelming and exhausting, but also greatly appreciated

You should only need to provide your names and details once, not every time you enquire about relief or recovery assistance. It is distressing having to re-tell your story again and again.



ADF support

The assistance by the Australian Defence Force in recovery was greatly appreciated, but there were too many limitations on what they could do and when.

Clear and constructive coordination, planning, training and directives is needed for ADF teams and personnel to be effective in taskings for disaster recovery.



Reflections



Fiona Gill

Director, Fire Management
National Parks & Wildlife
Service South Australia

“It was so important to hear first-hand from people about their lived experience of the fire’s impacts and their opinions about how the fire was managed and that agency and recovery leaders stayed in ‘listening’ mode without jumping to answers or solutions.”

The themes have informed the ongoing engagement with local community on a range of parks & wildlife management issues and (hopefully) giving park neighbours and the wider community greater confidence going forward.



Reflections



Ken Hall
Director Regional Operations
South Australian
Country Fire Service

“The sessions were invaluable from a lessons learnt perspective .. people were open – they’d had time to work through what they had experienced ... so when asking the why questions, they were less emotive and more inquisitive .. many just wanted to better understand.

Going forward, to make this work we need to make this a standard procedure .. telling people at the end of a (incident) response meeting we will come back and listen when things have calmed down. This sounds easy but once we’ve started, we are making a commitment we can’t walk away from. ”



Reflections



Catherine Tydeman
Recovery Officer 2019-2021
Kangaroo Island
South Australia

“It took so long to get off the ground but when the listening sessions started, it was so needed! And for some it was just the right time – and so important to tell their story uninterrupted in their own space, with a choice to talk one to one or in a group and simply be listened to.

There was a lot of ground covered, but to me it seemed that peoples' stories were often about emotional toil ... like being separated from loved ones...not just the physical losses.

Ongoing, I'd like to see a lead to progress this space. Recovery offices are just too temporary for these situations. So, whose responsibility is it?

What we did next



Reporting outcomes back to the community,
including:

- Dr Mika Peace, Bureau of Meteorology
- SACFS Chief and Deputy Chief Officer

Commitment and actions by core agencies

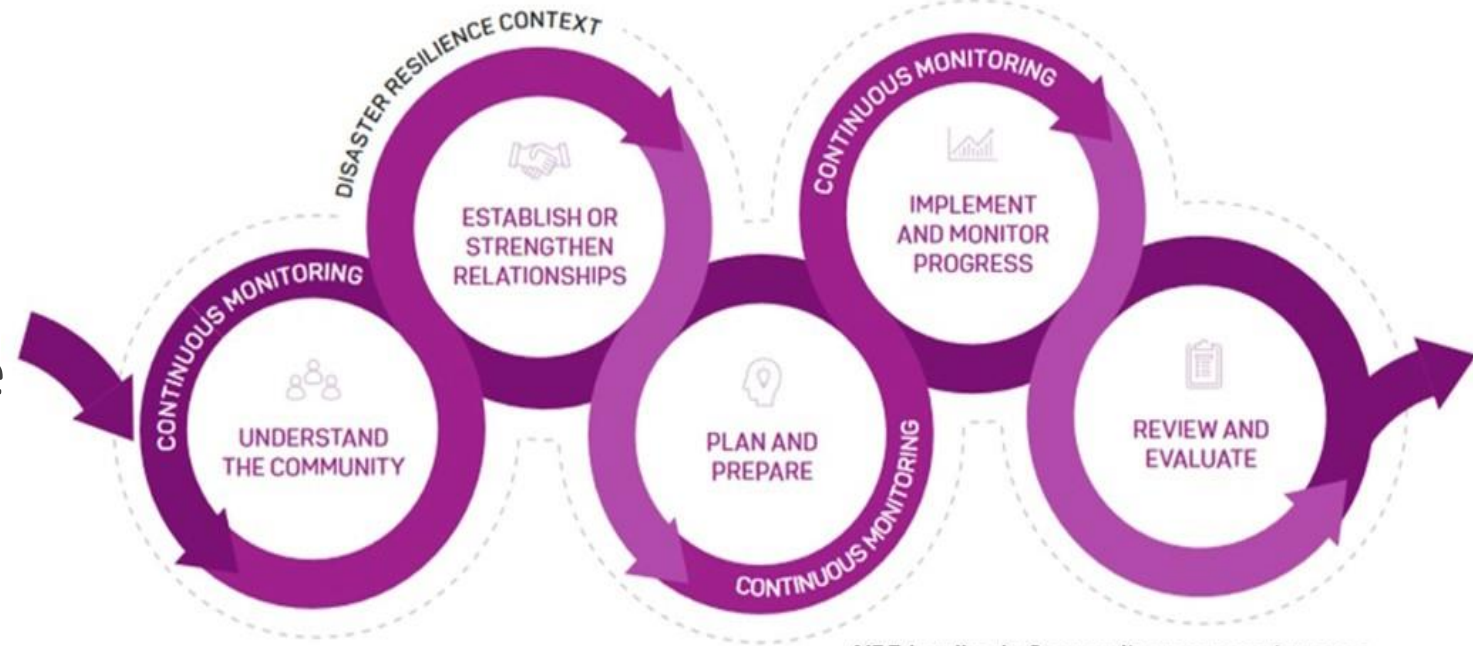
Continuing partnership

Role of Local Recovery Committee

Going forward

Everyone has a role

- Continuing partnership
- Core agencies
- Local Recovery Committee
- Community
- Individuals



AIDR handbook: Community engagement process



Thank you for listening

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able access action army asked away better breaks building **burn** burnt bushfire business
 centre **cfs** change chase check clear coming **community** concern
 contact control council **days** decision defend different direction emergency end
 evacuated everyone everything experience **farm** farmers feel felt fencing
 fighting **fire** food getting give government group happening **help** home
 house impacted important incident information **island** ki knowledge lack land
 leave listening live **local** lost mainland **management** meeting message
 national **needs** neighbours night others **parks** penneshaw **people** person
 phone **plan** prepared private **property** provide public radio really
recovery report resources response road safe saved sheep someone staff started station
 stay stop **support** system things think times together trees **trucks** understand **units**
 updates **volunteers** wanted **water** weeks wind **work** years